```
VZCZCXRO7655
RR RUEHDBU RUEHLN RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHAH #0234/01 0551141
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 241141Z FEB 06
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7036
INFO RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 2512
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 1604
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1261
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1144
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0324
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//DHO-2/REA/NMJIC-J2//
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J5/RUE//
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ2/HSE/CCJ5//
```

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 000234

SIPDIS

FOR SCA/CEN (PERRY)
ANKARA FOR AGRICULTURE COUNSELOR JAMES HIGGISTON
ASTANA FOR ESTH (PUTNAM)

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR ETRD PGOV KFLU TX
SUBJECT: WHO RECOMMENDS VIROLOGICAL REFERENCE LAB AND
EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE TRAINING

REFTEL: A) ASHGABAT 213 AND PREVIOUS
             B) STATE 153802

Sensitive But Unclassified; Not for Internet Distribution

¶1. PER REFTEL C, POST PROVIDES A WEEKLY FOLLOW-UP ON
AVIAN INFLUENZA.

WHO RECOMMENDATION

¶2.   (SBU) FOLLOWING THE FEBRUARY 14-16 SEMINAR ON AI
(REF A), WHO REPRESENTATIVES VISITED THE MINISTRY OF
HEALTH AND MEDICAL INDUSTRY'S (MOHMI) ASHGABAT SANITARY
AND EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STATION (SES) AND THE MINISTRY OF
AGRICULTURE'S VETERINARY LABORATORY. ACCORDING TO THE
WHO LOCAL LIAISON OFFICER, THE TWO LABORATORIES ARE
RESPONSIBLE FOR AI DIAGNOSTICS. WHILE THE SES LABORATORY
IS CAPABLE OF CONDUCTING SIMPLE HEMOGLOBIN AGGLUTINATION
INHIBITION ANALYSES (HAI), THE VETERINARY LABORATORY HAS
MORE SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT AND STAFF TRAINED IN
PAKISTAN. THE VETERINARY LABORATORY CAN CONDUCT ALL
THREE TYPES OF AI ANALYSES: HAI, IEA AND PCR. THE
DIRECTOR OF THE LABORATORY TOLD POL/ECON ASST THAT THE
WHO REPRESENTATIVES WERE IMPRESSED BY THE PROFESSIONALISM
OF THE STAFF, BUT WERE THEN SURPRISED TO LEARN THE
LABORATORY IS SELF-FINANCED.

¶3.   (U) IN ADDITION TO THE TWO MAIN LABORATORIES, THERE
IS ALSO A LABORATORY AT THE NEW DIAGNOSTIC CENTER IN
ASHGABAT, WHICH HAS EQUIPMENT FOR CONDUCTING PCR
ANALYSIS. PRESENTLY, THE LABORATORY IS NOT OPERATING DUE
TO THE ABSENCE OF TRAINED PERSONNEL.

¶4.   (SBU) WHO ADVISOR BERNARDUS GUNTER RECOMMENDED THAT
THE GOTX CREATE A SECONDARY LEVEL NATIONAL VIROLOGICAL
REFERENCE LABORATORY TO ENHANCE VIRAL SURVEILLANCE AND
IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LABORATORY TESTS. (NOTE: ACCORDING
TO THE WHO BIOLOGICAL SECURITY CLASSIFICATION, SECOND
LEVEL LABORATORIES DEAL WITH VIRAL INFECTIONS LIKE TB,
AIDS, AND AI, AND REQUIRE SPECIAL HANDLING OF VIRAL
MATERIALS AND PROTECTIVE GEAR, WHICH THE GOTX CURRENTLY

LACKS. END NOTE.) GUNTER RECOMMENDED THAT THE LABORATORY
CONDUCT THREE MAIN TYPES OF DIAGNOSTIC TESTS: HEMOGLOBIN
AGGLUTINATION INHIBITION (HAI), IMMUNE FLUORESCENT
ANALYSES (IEA, ELIZA) AND PCR-RT ANALYSES. GUNTER
DISCUSSED THE RECOMMENDATIONS WITH DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE
CABINET OF MINISTERS AND MINISTER OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL
INDUSTRY (MOHMI) GURBANGULY BERDIMUHAMMEDOV.

¶5.   (U) WHO'S GUNTER ALSO RECOMMENDED PROVIDING TWO
WEEKS OF EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE TRAINING IN
TURKMENISTAN, POSSIBLY IN COOPERATION WITH THE U.S.
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC). GUNTER
SAID HE WILL CONTACT CDC/ALMATY DIRECTLY TO CONSULT ABOUT
OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION.

COMMENT

¶6.   (SBU) WHILE OPENLY ACKNOWLEDGING INTERNATIONAL
INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT IN THE AI PREVENTION EFFORTS,
LOCAL MEDIA REPORTS STRESSED THE GOTX'S PREPARATORY
MEASURES AND THE RESULTING HIGH LEVEL OF PREPAREDNESS FOR
AN OUTBREAK. ONE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL HAILED THE WHO'S AI
SEMINAR AS A SUCCESS BECAUSE OF THE QUALITY TRAINING AND
THE OPPORTUNITY FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO OPENLY
INTERACT ON AI; HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE MOHMI CUT THE
QUESTION AND ANSWER PORTION OF THE SEMINAR SHORT,
DEPRIVING SEVERAL AUDIENCE MEMBERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO
TALK DIRECTLY TO THE WHO EXPERTS. ONCE AGAIN, THE GOTX'S
EFFORTS FOLLOW THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE. THE GOTX IS
WILLING TO TAKE THE MINIMAL STEPS NECESSARY TO PROJECT AN
IMAGE OF ACTION AND PREPAREDNESS, BUT IN REALITY, ITS
PREPARATIONS TO DATE WILL SIMPLY NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO

ADEQUATELY RESPOND IN THE EVENT OF AN AI OUTBREAK. END
COMMENT.

JACOBSON